

VIDEO PROCESSOR ALIGNMENT CLAMPING SPRING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 This application claims the benefit of U. S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/554,743, entitled "Video Processor Alignment Clamping Spring" and filed March 19, 2004, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 The invention relates generally to a digital light processing (DLPTM) projection system for use with a microdisplay.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

At the core of every digital light processing (DLPTM) projection system is an optical 15 semiconductor known as a digital micromirror device (DMD) chip. The mechanical alignment of the DMD chip to the rest of the light engine is critical to properly locating the picture onto the screen.

A special fixture or machine is required to align the DMD assembly (including the heatsink and PC board) to the core optics array. Features are typically built into the assembly 20 for the machine to manipulate the DMD chip so as to align it.

Existing light engine designs hard mount the DMD assembly to the optics housing and then adjust the optical system around the chip position. Since, this alignment is performed visually on the screen by an operator the electronics are live during this alignment and the DMD chip needs to be in focus for the alignment to be performed properly.

SUMMARY

The present invention provides a clamping spring, including a sheet of resilient material having an interconnected plurality of alternating first and second tabs disposed around the periphery thereof. The first tabs being angled upwardly and having mounting slots therein. The second tabs being angled downwardly. A force applied to the first tabs provides a consistent controlled clamping force at the second tabs. In a further embodiment, the present invention provides a clamping arrangement, wherein a DMD assembly is clamped together by a plurality of first shoulder bolts with coil springs thereon and the DMD assembly is clamped to an optics housing by a spring and a plurality of second shoulder bolts extending through longitudinal apertures in the first shoulder bolts.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawing figures, of which:

Fig. 1 shows an exploded view of a DMD clamping assembly for video processor alignment according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 2 an exploded view of the clamping assembly of Fig. 1 taken generally along axis 2-2 in Fig. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention provides a controlled clamping force to a DMD assembly, so that it remains in place between the production steps of DMD alignment and the final clamping of the screws. It also provides a positive Z-axis bias to the assembly, to eliminate any tolerance in that direction. The DMD needs to be in the correct Z-axis position throughout the alignment process to keep the picture on the screen in focus. In an

exemplary embodiment of the present invention, this clamping action is accomplished using a stamped steel leaf spring. This spring system applies adequate pressure to the DMD to keep it in proper focus, as well as to hold it in place between alignment and final clamping.

5 In the present light engine design, the core optics assembly is fixed in location.

Therefore, it is necessary to adjust the DMD to the optics for picture alignment.

According to an exemplary embodiment, the present invention uses a stamped steel piece to act as a leaf spring 70, as shown in FIG. 1. The spring 70 is compressed by two shoulder screws 95, which apply a prescribed loading to a DMD assembly for holding it to the 10 optics housing 2. With this loading applied, the DMD assembly has enough freedom to be manipulated by an alignment machine, but will still be held in place until the system can be locked down.

The DMD assembly, as shown in Fig. 1 includes a DMD chip (not shown) that is mounted in an interposer 20 and operatively connected to a printed circuit board (PCB) 30.

15 An interposer clamp 10 is positioned against the interposer 20 opposite the PCB 30. The interposer 20 is aligned with the PCB 30 and the interposer clamp 10 by pins 21, 22. A backer plate 50 is positioned on the PCB 30 opposite the interposer 20 with an insulator 40 between the backer plate 50 and the PCB 30. The backer plate 50 has holding structures 51 for use by the alignment machine to hold the DMD assembly. The DMD assembly is 20 clamped together by first shoulder bolts 90 that pass through mounting holes in the backer plate 50, the insulator 40, and the PCB 30, and are then threaded into threaded holes 11 formed in the interposer clamp 10. Compression springs 80 are provided on the first shoulder bolts 90 to provide resilient clamping force on the DMD assembly when the first shoulder bolts are torqued down.

25 In the embodiment shown in Fig. 1, a heat slug 52 is provided to transfer heat from

the DMD chip. The heat slug 52 extends through openings in the backer plate 50, insulator 40, and PCB 30, and has a flange 53 that rests against the backer plate 50. The heat slug is biased against the backer plate 50 by a leaf spring 60 that is held in place by the first shoulder bolts 90.

5 As shown in Fig. 1, the DMD assembly is held in place and biased in the Z-axis direction by a clamping spring 70. The clamping spring 70 comprises a sheet of resilient material, such as steel, for example. The clamping spring 70 has an interconnected plurality of alternating first and second tabs 72, 74 disposed around the periphery of the clamping spring 70. In the exemplary embodiment illustrated in Fig. 1, two first tabs 72 and two second tabs 74 are provided, with one of each tab on each end of a rectangular body having an opening for the heat slug 52. The first tabs 72 are angled upwardly and have mounting slots 73 in them. The second tabs 74 are angled downwardly. When force is applied to the first tabs 72, the clamping spring 70 provides a consistent controlled clamping force at the second tabs 74.

15 The optical housing 2, has bosses 3 for supporting the DMD assembly. Threaded holes 4 are formed in the bosses 3. As best shown in Fig. 2, the first shoulder bolts 90 are hollow, having an aperture extending through the first shoulder bolt 90 along its longitudinal axis. The second shoulder bolts 95 are placed through the slots 73 in the clamping spring 70 and the apertures in the first shoulder bolts 90, then threaded into the threaded holes 4 in the 20 bosses 3 of the optical housing 2.

In another embodiment of the invention (not illustrated), four coil springs and four shoulder screws are used to provide force to the system. In this embodiment, there is considerable tolerance in the force/deflection curves of the coil springs. Because the four springs act independently, there can be more or less force applied at some of the locations.

The foregoing illustrates some of the possibilities for practicing the invention. Many other embodiments are possible within the scope and spirit of the invention. It is, therefore, intended that the foregoing description be regarded as illustrative rather than limiting, and that the scope of the invention is given by the appended claims together with their full range of equivalents.